IN THE CLAIMS:

Please re-write the claims to read as follows:

1. (Original) A method for selecting a coprocessor from a plurality of coprocessors to process a packet of a predetermined size, the method comprising the steps of:

determining a cost associated with the packet, the cost representing a load associated with processing the packet;

determining an anticipated load for each coprocessor in the plurality of coprocessors using the cost; and

selecting the coprocessor from the plurality of coprocessors based on the anticipated load.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining a cost further comprising the step of:

calculating the cost using a rate associated with processing the packet.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the rate is stored in a lookup table.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the step of calculating the cost further comprising the step of:

dividing the packet's size by the rate.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the step of calculating the cost further comprising the step of:

multiplying the packet's size by a multiplicative inverse of the rate.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining a cost further comprising the step of:

applying the packet's size to a lookup table containing one or more cost values to determine the cost.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining an anticipated load further comprising the step of:

adding the cost to a cumulative load associated with each coprocessor in the plurality of coprocessors.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting the coprocessor further comprising the step of:

selecting the coprocessor from a group of one or more coprocessors whose anticipated load is a minimum load.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the coprocessor is selected using a scheduling algorithm.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting the coprocessor further comprising the step of:

determining if a port associated with the packet is congested.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the step of selecting the coprocessor further comprising the step of:

selecting the coprocessor from a group of one or more coprocessors whose anticipated load is not a minimum load.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the step of selecting the coprocessor further comprising the step of:

selecting the coprocessor from a group of one or more coprocessors whose anticipated load is a minimum load.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

incrementing a cumulative load associated with the selected coprocessor.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the step of incrementing a cumulative load further comprising the step of:

adding the cost to the cumulative load.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

decrementing a cumulative load associated with the selected coprocessor.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the step of decrementing a cumulative load further comprising the steps of:

subtracting the cost from the cumulative load.

17. (Original) An apparatus for selecting a coprocessor from a plurality of coprocessors to process a packet of a predetermined size, the apparatus comprising:

a memory containing one or more software routines, including a software routine configured to determine a cost associated with the packet, the cost representing a load associated with processing the packet; and

a processor configured to execute the software routines to determine an anticipated load for each coprocessor in the plurality of coprocessors using the cost and to select the coprocessor from the plurality of coprocessors based on the anticipated load.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 further comprising:

a data structure;

wherein the cost is determined using information contained in the data structure.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the information contained in the data structure includes the cost.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the information contained in the data structure includes a rate the coprocessor can process the packet.

21. (Original) An intermediate device configured to select a coprocessor from a plurality of coprocessors to process a packet of a predetermined size, the intermediate device comprising:

means for determining a cost associated with the packet, the cost representing a load associated with processing the packet;

means for determining an anticipated load for each coprocessor in the plurality of coprocessors using the cost; and

means for selecting the coprocessor based on the anticipated load.

22. (Original) A computer readable media comprising:

the computer readable media containing computer executable instructions for execution in a processor for the practice of a [~~the~~] method ~~of claim 1~~ for selecting a coprocessor from a plurality of coprocessors to process a packet of a predetermined size, the method comprising the steps of:

determining a cost associated with the packet, the cost representing a load associated with processing the packet;

determining an anticipated load for each coprocessor in the plurality of coprocessors using the cost; and

selecting the coprocessor from the plurality of coprocessors based on the anticipated load.